

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 EUR-12 DHA-02 /097 W

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FOR IEA AND ICS/D, CINCPAC FOR USIA ADVISOR, STATE FOR CU/EA

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS -- MARCH 18 - 24, 1977

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS:

1. GOVERNMENT BANS "LEFTIST" BOOKS.

THE RTG THIS WEEK IMPOSED A BAN ON VARIOUS BOOKS CONSIDERED SUBVERSIVE OF THAI VALUES, AND THEY WILL BE BARRED FROM PUBLIC SALE OR DISPLAY. TITLES WERE NOT GIVEN, BUT THE LIST INCLUDED WORKS DEALING WITH MAO TSE TUNG, CHE GUEVARA, AND OTHER REVOLUTIONARIES. BOOKS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES WILL SUPPOSEDLY NOT BE AFFECTED.

2. REACTION TO CARTER ADMINISTRATION INITIATIVES.

A. THE WOODCOCK COMMISSION. AN UPSURGE IN EDITORIAL COMMENT THIS WEEK ON RECENT INITIATIVES OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION BROKE THE PATTERN OFSHERETOFORE SPORADIC REACTION. GOVERAGE OF THE WOODCOCK COMMISSION WAS LIGHT IN THAI, MODERATE IN ENGLISH, AND HEAVY IN UNCLASSIFIED

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CHINESE NEWSPAPERS. EDITORIAL COMMENT SHOWED CONCERN THAT ANY AMERICAN AID TO VIET NAM MIGHT INCREASE SRV INFLUENCE AND ENABLE IT TO INCREASE ASSISTANCE TO THE THAI INSURGENCY. BUT COLUMNIST "KHUNSUEK" (PSEUDONYM), DAILY TIME MARCH 21, SPECULATED THAT RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE U.S. WOULD HAVE A MODERATING EFFECT ON VIET NAM. "TA MOLOR" IN BAN MUANG MARCH 17 VOICED SIMILAR IDEAS, ADDING THAT THE U.S. WISHED TO OFFSET USSR AND PRC INFLUENCE IN THE REGION.

BUT HE WARNED AGAINST THE US FLYING "OVER OUR HEADS TO LAND IN HANOI" AND ACTING "AS IF IT WERE GOING TO GIVE THAILAND TO VIETNAM." THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE NATION REVIEW ON MARCH 21 FOUND OMINOUS A REPORT THAT THE USSR HAD PLEDGED TO STRENGTHEN THE SRV ARMY.

B. HUMAN RIGHTS. SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS USED THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONTROVERSY TO GENTLY CHIDE THE RTG IN THIS AREA. A CHAO THAI EDITORIAL ON MARCH 21 APPLAUDED CARTER FOR HIS HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVES, AND ADDED POINTEDLY THAT "IF THE PRESENT THAI GOVERNMENT DESIRES TO BRING DEMOCRACY TO OUR COUNTRY... IT SHOULD BEGIN TO CORRECT ITS SHORTCOMINGS. RESTRICTION OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND EXPRESSION IS REGARDED AS A VIOLATION OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS." LEADING TV PERSONALITY AND CHAO THAI COLUMNIST PICHAI VASANASONG WROTE ON MARCH 17 THAT CARTER "HAS DEMONSTRATED HIMSELF TO BE A LEADER UNLIKE ANYBODY ELSE... I WOULD LIKE TO FIND SOMEONE HERE TO LEAD THE FIGHT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OF OUR COUNTRYMEN IN RURAL AREAS. HOW ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF?" ON MARCH 16, SIAM RATH COLUMNIST "KASEM SIRISAMPHAN" WROTE, WITH OBVIOUS LOCAL ALLUSIONS, THAT CARTER'S ATTEMPTS TO REACH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL. CONCLUDES KASEM: "A POLITICAL LEADER MUST KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH HIS PEOPLE AND NOT ISOLATE HIMSELF FROM REALITY."

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

3. POST IS IN MIDST OF BUSY WEEK-LONG PROGRAMMING DESIGNED AFFORD OPPORTUNITY FOR THREE VISITING U.S. POLITICAL SCIENTISTS MEET AND CONFER WITH RTG OFFICIALS, UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS, AMERICAN EMBASSY OFFICERS AND AMERICAN AND THAI JOURNALISTS. GROUP CONSISTS OF UNCLASSIFIED

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DR. LINCOLN BLOOMFIELD, M.I.T., AND AMSPECS DR. JOSEPH ZASLOFF, UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH AND DR. MACALISTER BROWN, WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY. DR. BLOOMFIELD, WHO BEGINS YEAR-LONG CONSULTANCY WITH AGENCY JULY 1, IS VISITING SEA TO GAIN FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE POLITICAL CLIMATE OF AREA. HE HAS BEEN BRIEFED BY EMBOFFS AND WILL HAVE INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON U.S. - THAI RELATIONS WITH THAI AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS AND JOURNALISTS. BANGKOK M.I.T. CLUB GAVE DINNER IN HIS HONOR MARCH 22. ON MARCH 23 HE SPOKE INFORMALLY TO 15 MEMBERS FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB OF THAILAND ON VULNERABILITIES AFFECTING NATIONS AS RESULT OF INTERDEPENDENCE, WITH Q&A. PRESENTATION AND REACTION GOOD. POST WILL REPORT LATER ON BALANCE OF HIS PROGRAM. MEANWHILE, AMSPECS ZASLOFF AND BROWN HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITIES BRIEFINGS AT EMBASSY AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES MEET THAI AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS FOR EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON WORLD AND U.S.-THAI ISSUES. THEY GO UDORN MARCH 25 FOR TALKS WITH AMCONSUL THERE AND VISIT TO REFUGEE CAMP.K MCGINLEY

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